

A PAPER

ADVOCATING THE FORMATION
... OF A ..

North Canterbury
Defence League



To provide the Armament for the effectual defence
of the Port of Lyttelton, and the equipment
of a Local Field Force.

BY A. JOYCE.



WITH APPLICATION FORM

Price: ONE PENNY.

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21 September 1981

DEFENCE OF NORTH CANTERBURY

(By A. JOYCE.)

It appears probable that the British Empire will, in the course of a short time, perhaps a few years, but possibly within a much shorter period, have to encounter the rivalry of Germany. Should this be the case, we may expect to find the Germans, with their splendid ability for organisation and thoroughness, no mean enemy, and it behoves us all to consider carefully what preparation can be made against the coming struggle. When the offer of a Dreadnought from the dominion reached England, the London "Times" stated that, in its opinion, the best use to which any contributions to the Imperial Navy could be applied would be to strengthen the defences of each portion of the Empire in its own part of the world

At the commencement of a war the principal danger to which this dominion will be exposed will be from raiding cruisers attacking the ports, not with a view to occupation, or of levying contributions; but with the object of destroying shipping, damaging wharves and docks and crippling England's commerce. Our first duty to ourselves and to the Empire is to protect our ports and coaling stations for the use of our mercantile shipping and of the Navy. I am not going to take up time by detailing the present defences of Lyttelton. Suffice it to say that a vessel with modern weapons could silence what guns we have without com-

ing within range of them, and the harbour would then be defenceless. The port of Lyttelton is, from an Imperial point of view, the most important harbour in New Zealand, for the following reasons:—

1. On the completion of the West Coast railway it will be in direct and secure communication with the vast and unequalled coal deposits on the west of this island, and must therefore be the most important coaling station within the dominion.

2. It is the principal port in New Zealand for the shipment of grain and meat, the supply of which will be of supreme importance to the Mother Country in event of war.

3. It is the most easily defended harbour in the dominion, being situated about five miles from the ocean, and with reasonable armament would be secure against raiding attacks.

Holding public meetings and passing resolutions calling upon either the New Zealand or the Imperial Government to do something is of very little use if the crisis is as grave as it appears to be. We must realise the fact that, even if the strengthening of the defences of the port were authorised, it would take at least a year to import and mount the guns that would be required, so there is no time to be lost.

My object in writing this paper is to make a definite proposal as to the action that might be taken by the people of the North Canterbury district with regard to local defence, so that on Parliament meeting in October there may be a definite proposal from the district. North Canterbury is exceptionally favoured as regards defence; indeed, it may be affirmed that the de-

fence of Lyttelton is the defence of North Canterbury. There is no place between Lyttelton and the Hurunui River on the north or between Akaroa and the Rangitata River on the south where a force could be landed and retain communication with its ships; indeed, I confidently assert that, should the defences of Lyttelton be sufficiently strong to resist an attack, an enemy would most probably select Akaroa as the best base obtainable, none of the other bays in the Peninsula being equal to Akaroa for the purpose.

The defence of North Canterbury depends upon two conditions:—

1. Upon the port of Lyttelton being sufficiently strong to repel attack.

2. Upon our possession of a field force strong enough to defeat an enemy landed in Akaroa or one of the bays on the Peninsula.

To strengthen the defences of Lyttelton I suggest mounting a 9.2 gun on Sumner Head. Any vessel attempting to enter either Lyttelton or Port Levy would come under the fire of this gun, which is capable of penetrating the armour of any vessel except a first-class battleship. Inside the harbour I propose to strengthen the defences by the addition of six six-inch quick-firing guns of the latest pattern. These weapons fire a 100lb shell, and can discharge eight aimed shots in each minute. There would also be six 12-pound quick-firing guns to repel boat attacks. All these guns would be in addition to the present armament, and with these additions it would require some very powerful vessels to force an entrance into the harbour. The second condition for the effective defence of North Canterbury is the possession of a field force, which I would suggest should consist of 2500 Volunteers and

2500 members of rifle clubs. I am convinced that should the defence of the district be undertaken on the lines I suggest there will be no lack of men to carry it out, men who would be willing to give the time necessary for training, and whose services being voluntary would far exceed in value those of men enrolled under a compulsory system. The Volunteer force would consist of 400 garrison artillery, 400 field artillery (two batteries of six guns each), 1600 infantry (two regiments) and 100 engineers. There would also be 100 permanent artillery men. I propose having 20 Maxim guns, which would give one maxim to each infantry company. The rifle clubs would not require the same amount of training as the Volunteer corps, but must have sufficient to operate with them, and to advance or retire in good order, and to take advantage of cover when in action.

I have submitted these details because they are necessary to explain my proposals with regard to the defence of the district.

The following is an approximate estimate of the cost of armament proposed:—

One 9.2 gun	£ 12,500
150 rounds armour-piercing shell ammunition	3,750
Freight, mounting, gun pit, magazine and quarters for men	20,000
Six 6in guns, £5000 each	30,000
2000 rounds, at £15 10s	31,000
Freight, mounting, gun pits, magazines and quarters for men	25,000
Six 12-pr guns on pedestals	9,000
Freight and mounting with magazine 3000 rounds	3,000
Two batteries of field artillery, six guns each battery, with two wagons per gun	25,000
12,000 rounds shrapnel	12,000
20 field Maxims	9,000
500,000 rounds of ammunition	2,000
5000 magazine rifles, with bayonets and accoutrements	20,000
5,000,000 rounds of ammunition	25,000
Total	£230,250

Taking the cost of the above armament as £230,000 I wish to submit the following proposition, viz.:—That the three North Canterbury counties of Ashley, Selwyn and Ashburton should form a defence district to be called the North Canterbury Defence District, and should undertake to obtain and mount the armament proposed. The estimated cost being £230,000, and calculating interest at 4 per cent, with 1 per cent sinking fund,, would entail a cost to the district of £11,500 a year for about thirty years. In order to compute the burden entailed upon the community by this proposal I have extracted the following figures from the statistics of local bodies for the year ending March, 31, 1907. They will be approximately correct, but I believe include the value of Government and other properties not subject to local taxation.

As the expenditure proposed will be for the protection of Government property as well as of private property, I consider that the Government should bear its full share of any rate struck to provide for the expenditure.

County Values Exclusive of Boroughs.

	£
Ashley	5,483,861
Selwyn	9,490,087
Ashburton	6,593,757
Total	21,567,705

Boroughs, Capital Value.

	£
Rangiora	215,995
Kaipoi	184,130
Christchurch—	
Central	5,907,379
St Albans	1,154,238
Sydenham	1,351,682
Linwood	786,882
Woolston	297,696
New Brighton	117,905
Sumner	353,455
Lyttelton	854,754
Ashburton	445,618
Total	11,669,734

To provide the sum of £11,500 a year would necessitate a rate of one-sixteenth of a penny in the £ for the counties and of one-eighth of a penny in the £ for the boroughs. I have made the borough rate double that of the county because the risk entailed upon the borough in event of invasion is very much greater than that upon a scattered country district. I have also left out the county of Akaroa, as in event of invasion it would be quite impossible to prevent an enemy landing in some one of the numerous bays on the peninsula, and the county might fairly be exempted from a monetary contribution. I am convinced that a considerable number of the hardy settlers on the peninsula would enthusiastically assist in the formation of a defensive force. Of course the cost of maintaining the force would be a charge upon the defence expenditure of the dominion, of which this district would be entitled to its full share. The whole force and armament would be under the control of the General Government. I do not advocate any control by the local authorities, but merely that the district should ensure that the armament required for the defence of North Canterbury should be obtained with the least possible delay. The district would still be entitled to its share of the defence expenditure for the whole dominion, and if the Government expended money upon the defences of other ports, Lyttelton would be entitled to participate in this expenditure in the form of increased armament. It is time we left off talking and started the work of preparation. The trouble appears imminent and unless we are ready when the storm breaks there will be no time to prepare and there will be very little hope of our retaining our independence or assisting the Empire. Passing resolutions calling upon someone to do something will not help us,

the responsibility is upon ourselves, not on others, on the public, more than on the Government. If the protection of North Canterbury is not worth the small rate which these proposals entail, then we must not complain if our inheritance passes into more capable hands, and the sooner we set ourselves to study German or Japanese the better, for we may find one of these languages very useful in the not far distant future.

Lyttelton, July 31, 1909.



NOTE.

IF AFTER reading the foregoing paper you are willing to assist in the formation of the above League, I shall feel obliged if you will sign and forward to me the attached application form.

You will notice I have made the subscription a minimum of One Shilling. It is evident that unless the League has the support of a large number of persons throughout the district it cannot be a success, and if it has the support of a large number, the amount of individual subscription required will be small.

Of course the League cannot be carried on without expense for meetings and advertisements, but so far as I am personally concerned, I hope to pay my expenses by the sale of this booklet, and shall pay all subscriptions received into the Bank until the first meeting of members, when they will be handed over to the Treasurer, or dealt with as the meeting may decide.

A membership ticket and receipt for subscription will be sent to each member.

Persons willing to assist in obtaining members throughout the North Canterbury District, between the Rangitata and Hurunui Rivers, are invited to communicate with me.

All Electors are invited to become members.

A. JOYCE,
Box 23,
Lyttelton.

NORTH CANTERBURY DEFENCE LEAGUE.

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP.

SIGNATURE.	ADDRESS.	SUBSCRIPTION MINIMUM ONE SHILLING.

A meeting will be held about the 1st September to appoint officers and committee. See note on previous page.

A. JOYCE,
Box 23, LYTTTELTON.

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